

Florentiner March (*Grande marcia Italiana*), Opus 214 – Julius Fučík (1872–1916)

Julius Fučík was a bandmaster and composer from the Czech Republic. He was a student at the Prague Conservatory from 1885 to 1891 where he studied composition with Antonín Dvořák. In 1897 he became bandmaster of the 86th Austro-Hungarian Regiment. During this time, he composed highly successful marches and other genres until he retired in Berlin in 1913.

Florentiner March was written in 1907. Frederick Fennell edited Fučík's work in 1980. He writes regarding Fučík and *Florentiner March*,

Among the brightest jewels in the composer's crown must be the instant recognition of his music, as *his*—that, in spite of similar pieces, there is none like *his*—that nobody will again assemble those particular notes and their spacings exactly as *he* has; his creation, especially if it is among the very best of its kind, remains unique and extraordinary.

In a short, brilliant career during which he served as bandmaster to the 86th Hungarian Infantry Regiment at Budapest, he developed his own wide-ranging style of writing marches, a popular dual profession among bandmasters amidst the on-going nationalism then flourishing in Europe. Thus, it is not surprising to find a Hungarian writing an Italian grand march and outdoing many Italians in the process! Marches of every dimension and purpose were the popular music of his day. And when it came to dimension, *Florentiner* reached for the ultimate. In America, we might call it a concert march, or a symphonic march—even an operatic march, and all of these might apply according to one's taste.

Lichtweg/Lightway - Jennifer Jolley (b. 1981)

Jennifer Jolley is a composer, conductor, and professor. Her work is founded on the belief that the pleasures of music have the potential to engage political and provocative subjects. Jennifer received degrees in music and composition from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music. She currently serves as Associate Professor of Music Theory and Composition in the Department of Music, Multimedia, Theatre, and Dance at Lehman College in the Bronx.

Lichtweg/Lightway was written in 2016. She writes,

Lichtweg/Lightway is a wind ensemble piece based on Keith Sonnier's light installation in Connecting Level 03 in Terminal 1 at the Munich Airport. Bright fluorescent neon lights line the walls of a typical airport walkway to guide travelers to where they are going and help them cope with the stress of being in transit. In this piece, I musically portray the rhythmic placement of red and blue light emanating from this neon installation by creating a constant eighth-note ostinato that is heard throughout the work. Just as the panes of glass, mirrors and aluminum sheets refract and scatter the colorful neon light, this ostinato is diffused amongst the different colors in the ensemble.

Bridge to Manhattan - Elena Specht (b. 1993)

Elena Specht is an American composer who has written works for a multitude of ensembles, specializing in music for wind bands. Her music places an emphasis on colorful textures, lively rhythms, and graceful lyricism. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in composition and a Master of Music in music theory from Michigan State University. She currently serves as a music

librarian with “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, where she prepares music for performances by the Marine Band and Marine Chamber Orchestra and assists with maintaining the historical archives. Elena has previously held teaching positions in music theory and music history at Kalamazoo College, Michigan State University, and the University of Colorado Boulder.

Bridge to Manhattan was written in 2019. Specht writes,

Bridge to Manhattan was inspired by a trip I took across the George Washington Bridge in December 2018. This same bridge is the subject of William Schuman’s *George Washington Bridge*, a piece for concert band he composed in 1950. Crossing the George Washington Bridge is perhaps among the most chaotic driving experiences a person can have, as many lanes of traffic coming from multiple directions converge into a few lanes so countless people can cross from New Jersey into New York City. Constructed between 1927-1931, the bridge is the busiest motor vehicle bridge in the world. In Schuman’s time, though certainly busy, the bridge was different: it saw less traffic, and a lower deck for additional lanes was added in the 1960s. After crossing the bridge, I chose to write a piece about my experience with the George Washington Bridge: the slow merging of traffic from each direction, inching forward through a sea of cars, struggling to change lanes, all while entering one of the largest cities in the world.

Corsican Litany – Václav Nelhýbel (1919–1996)

Václav Nelhýbel was an American composer of Czechoslovakian birth. He studied classics and musicology at Prague University and conducting and composition at the Prague Conservatory. In 1957, he emigrated to the United States and became an American citizen in 1962. He held teaching positions at the University of Lowell in Massachusetts and the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania. Nelhýbel’s wind and band works combine melodic lines and complementary rhythmic patterns that create a vigorous drive that is unique to his style.

Corsican Litany was written in 1976. He writes,

In many parts of the world, it was once common practice during burial ceremonies to have professional mourners dramatize the grief of the bereaved by means of loud and emotional lamentations, repeated endlessly like a chant. In some places, notably the Mediterranean countries, these laments were sung, usually by women who were skilled in this macabre art and could command pay for their services.

Corsican laments, like Corsican deaths, were divided into two types: the ordinary *lamento* for death from natural causes, and the *vocero* if the mourned had been murdered. The latter then became a song of grief so intense, so filled with pain, that it could only be assuaged by an act of direct vengeance. The murderer was accused and identified by name, and the singer solemnly swore to see to it that he who had murdered would pay for it with his life.

Corsican Litany is based on a *vocero* first known to have been sung in 1775 at the funeral of a country doctor named Matju who had been murdered by his own patient, one Natale. The melody is introduced mournfully but grows steadily in passionate intensity until an astonishing climax is reached in the final menacing oath of vengeance.

Synthetic Sunlight - Steven Bryant (b. 1972)

Steven Bryant is an American composer. The son of a professional trumpet player and music educator, he strongly values music education, and his creative output includes several works for young and developing musicians. Steven holds degrees in composition from The Juilliard School, University of North Texas, and Ouachita University. He was Distinguished Visiting Professor of Composition at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro for the 2014–15 academic year and he currently resides in Durham, North Carolina.

Synthetic Sunlight was written in 2023 as part of a commission to honor Glen Adsit, Director of Bands at the Hartt School. Steven writes,

Synthetic Sunlight refers both to a world of 1980s neon nostalgia, with the band accompanied by electronic sounds that recall my youth, and to the idea of creating sunlight (and its many metaphorical stand-ins: warmth, joy, hope) where none is to be found naturally. This work is dedicated to Glen Adsit (1964–2024), for his tireless efforts to bring more interesting music for every level of musician into the world.

Variation Overture – Clifton Williams (1923–1976)

Clifton Williams was an American composer who started his journey in music as a pianist, horn player and mellophone player for Little Rock High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. After the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps and served as a drum major, still composing in his spare time. Williams studied composition at the prestigious Eastman School of Music under Howard Hanson from 1947-1949, earning a Master of Music degree. He was a professional French horn player with the San Antonio and New Orleans Symphony Orchestras.

Variation Overture was premiered in 1962 and features two distinct variations and a dramatic fanfare that are memorable and enjoyable for all audiences.